

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A vacuum pumping arrangement comprising:
 - a turbomolecular pumping mechanism having a rotor, wherein the rotor comprises rotor blades; and
 - a molecular drag pumping mechanism connected in series with the turbomolecular pumping mechanism, wherein a rotor of the molecular drag pumping mechanism is affixed to the rotor blades of the turbomolecular pumping mechanism; and
wherein the rotor blades of the turbomolecular pumping mechanism are provided with an annular ring to which the rotor of the molecular drag pumping mechanism is fixed.

Claim 2 (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 21, wherein the turbomolecular pumping mechanism has a plurality of stages and the rotor blades of at least the last stage are provided with the annular ring.
4. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the rotor of the molecular drag pumping mechanism is supported approximately half way along the radial length of the rotor blades of the turbomolecular pumping mechanism.
5. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the molecular drag pumping mechanism has a plurality of rotors affixed to the rotor blades of the turbomolecular pumping mechanism.

Claim 6 (canceled)

7. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the rotor of the molecular drag pumping mechanism has associated therewith two parallel pumping paths comprising a pumping path radially inward of the rotor and a pumping path radially outward of the rotor.

8. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the molecular drag pumping mechanism is of a holweck type.

9. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a second molecular drag pumping mechanism having a rotor, wherein the rotor of the second molecular drag pumping mechanism is supported by a rotor of a regenerative pumping exhausting mechanism.

10. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the rotor of the molecular drag pumping mechanism is made from a carbon fiber composite material.

11. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the rotor blades of the turbomolecular pumping mechanism are made from aluminum.

Claims 12-15 (canceled)

16. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 7, wherein the molecular drag pumping mechanism is of a holweck type.

Claims 17 (canceled)

18. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 5, further comprising a second molecular drag pumping mechanism having a rotor, wherein the rotor of the second molecular drag pumping mechanism is supported by the rotor of a regenerative pumping exhausting mechanism.

19. (previously presented) The vacuum pumping arrangement as claimed in claim 8, further comprising a second molecular drag pumping mechanism having a rotor, wherein the rotor of the

second molecular drag pumping mechanism is supported by the rotor of a regenerative pumping exhausting mechanism.